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Extract of a Letter

TO THE

RIGHT HONOURABLE

LORD VISCOUNT H**E,

ON

HIS NAVAL CONDUCT

IN THE

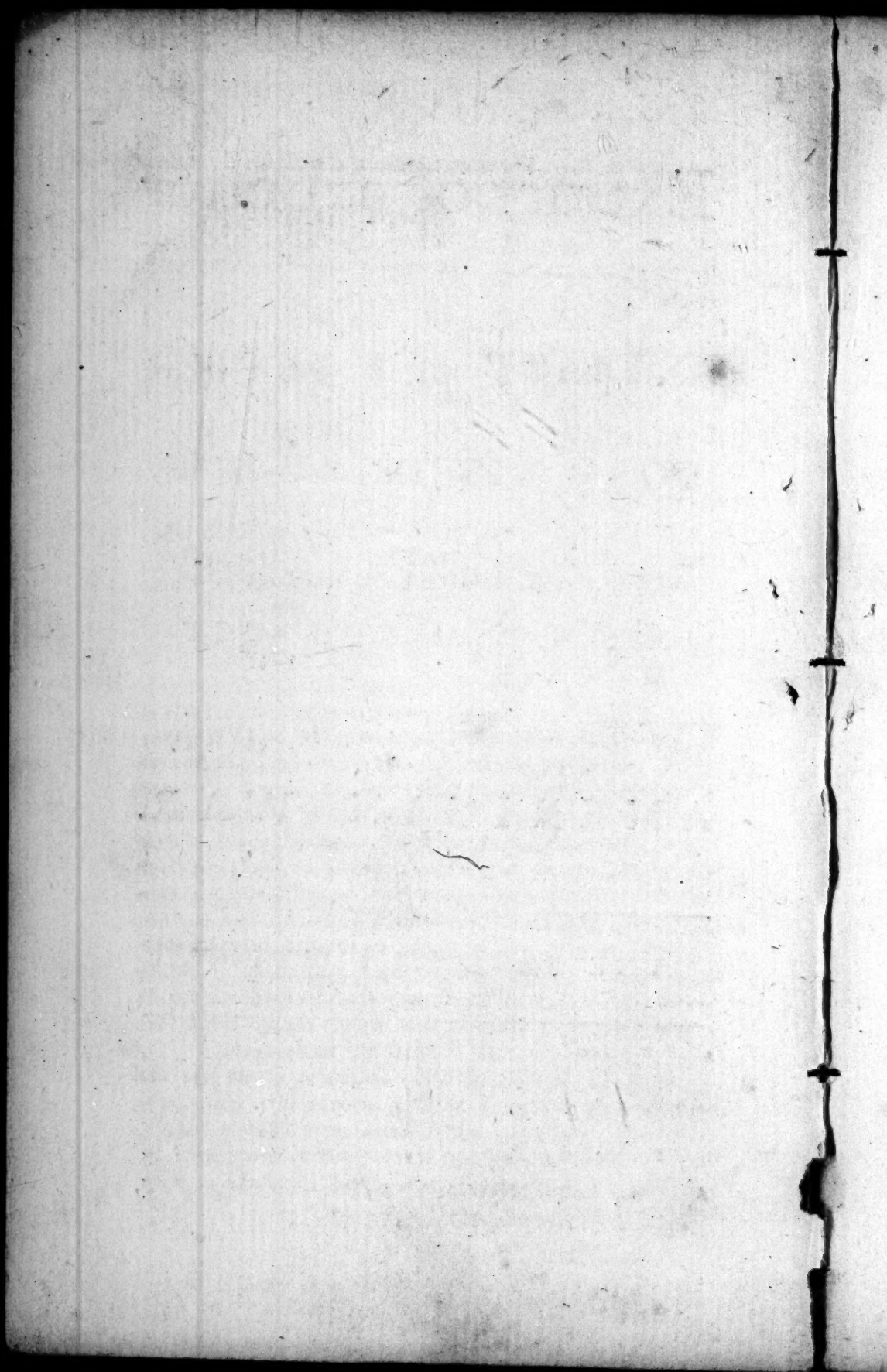
AMERICAN WAR.

THE SECOND EDITION.

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A N

EXTRACT of a LETTER

T O T H E

Right Hon. Lord Viscount H**E.

M Y L O R D,

WHILE others are recording the fame of your Brother in the American war, there is an unaccountable silence observed in respect to your Lordship's exploits. Whether this silence is owing to the general esteem for your naval abilities, or to the attention of the Public being engaged by the memorable actions of your Brother, I shall not determine. But as every man who accepts of a public trust, ought, if he executes it with honour and fidelity, to receive reward and applause; if with indolence and neglect, disgrace and condemnation; I mean to rescue your Lordship's name from the oblivion under which it is likely to remain.

Upon the revolt of the Colonies, your friends solicited, and your Lordship accepted of the command in America. Your skill and bravery were universally acknowledged; and your country formed the highest expectations of your success. The nature of your commission was twofold—To settle

amicably the matters in dispute between Great Britain and her Colonies, by an offer to redress their grievances; and to reduce them, by arms, if refractory, to their reasonable obedience. The terms of accommodation were adjusted by your own ideas of right, and of what, in your opinion, the Americans ought with gratitude to embrace.

On your arrival in America you met a delegation from the Congress, the pretended representatives of the Colonies, for they were not appointed, nor was their conduct approved of, by one fifth part of the people. These delegates refused to treat with your Lordship in such manner as you thought consistent with the dignity of your Sovereign. At this time you knew that their affairs were in the greatest confusion; that violent parties agitated the whole country; that one of these parties, consisting of the far greater part of the people, were zealously attached to the British government. The civil powers of the new states were not established: their troops were undisciplined, and in a great degree destitute of necessary appointments: they had then formed no naval or military magazines, and their future supplies were much within your power. Their ports were naked and defenceless, and their new states were without foreign connections, while a British fleet, of an amazing force, was riding in their principal harbour, and an army equally great was landed in their country.

Every man who wishes to reduce a country, will make the minds of the people the first great objects of his attention; and these are often more easily gained by policy than force. This truth has been confirmed a thousand times by experience. And in no country did the prejudices and attachments, the distractions and weakness of the inhabitants, ever promise more success, in a negotiation with a people at large, than was at that time offered in America.

The Congress and their adherents had publicly declared, " that the British government did not intend

tend to redress the American grievances; that they were resolved to tax the Colonists *without their consent*; and that it was the 'direct object' of your Sovereign to reduce them to a state of absolute tyranny." And to impress these assertions on the minds of the people, they further declared, that they had found, in the conference of their members with your Lordship, that your "commission contained no other authority of importance than what was expressed in the act of parliament, *viz.* that of granting pardons, with such exceptions as the Commissioners should think proper to make, and of declaring *America*, or any part of it, to be in the King's peace, *upon submission*." All this was done, as it were, in your presence. Every argument they could invent, was industriously dispersed to support these falsehoods, and to retain the people under this delusion.—Many saw the deception, and many suspected, and yet dreaded the truth of their assertions. These suspicions and fears were strongly operating on the minds of a considerable part of the people. Many hesitating under the influence of the first, remained unconcerned with the rebellion, and others under the second, were led to take up arms in favour of Congress. But all of them hoped on your arrival to see some explicit offers to redress their grievances. They wished to know clearly what Government expected from them, and on what terms. And they had reason to expect from your Lordship and your Brother, Commissioners of their Sovereign, and who besides had assumed the character of friends to America, that you would explain, without reserve, that *measure of liberty* with which they were in future to be governed. It was not to be expected, that any thing short of an explicit declaration of your powers could confute those falsehoods, and remove those fears which had been impressed on their minds with so much art and industry by the Congress. And yet your first declaration of the 20th of June 1776, contained nothing more than an intimation of your power to

"grant free and general pardons," and to restore the Colonies "to the peace of his Majesty;" and in that of 19th of September following, you only signify your desire "to confer with his Majesty's well-affected subjects," and that his "Majesty was disposed to direct a revision of his royal instructions, &c. and to concur in the revival of all acts by which his subjects may think themselves aggrieved."

If, my Lord, your authority was more extensive; if "you and your Brother had full powers to compromise the dispute between *Great Britain and America*, upon terms advantageous to both; and if the obtaining those terms detained you two months in England," as you declared in your message to the Congress by General Sullivan; and if upon a "perpetual grant of taxes by the respective Assemblies to the Crown, you had the power to engage, that a formal relinquishment should be made of taxation over the Colonies," as we must conclude you had from your letter to Lord Drummond; why did you content yourselves, in your first declaration of 20th June 1776, with only declaring them to be those of "granting free and general pardons, and of restoring the Colonies to the peace of his Majesty?" And after you had met the Delegates of Congress, when they declared to the people, that you had no other powers but those mentioned in your first declaration, Why did you, in your address to the people of 19th September, only signify to them that you were "desirous to confer with his Majesty's well-affected subjects;" and that his "Majesty was disposed to direct a revival of his royal instructions," &c. and that he was disposed "to concur in the revival of all acts by which his subjects may think themselves aggrieved?" This, my Lord, was truly a delicate mode of declaring your powers, and his Majesty's gracious intentions towards *his well-affected subjects*. It was too polite for a warrior, and too ambiguous for Commissioners from a state that was determined to obtain justice. To the Rebel Congress, who had taken up arms against your Sovereign, and were resolved

resolved to reject every proposal with contempt, however just, you were more explicit; to the "well-affected," who wished to embrace them with cordiality, you were equivocal, and obscure.

But why did you publish this address to the people at all? Was it to refute the infamous falsehoods alledged by the Congress, that your Sovereign "intended to reduce them to absolute despotism?" Was it to contradict their public declaration, that you had no power but to "grant pardons, and to restore the Colonies to the peace of the Crown?" No, my Lord: it was rather calculated to confirm, than disprove, those falsehoods; for it amounted to nothing more than that you had a power to "*confer*" (not to *treat*, not to *confirm*, or even to give *assurances* of the confirmation of what you had to propose;) and that his Majesty was *disposed to direct a revision of the acts*, not that he had directed you to revise them. Surely this was not the mode to alienate the minds of the people from the Congress, to convince them of the justice of the British government, or to gain them over to your country.

Again, my Lord: after the successes of your Brother in *Long Island*, *New York*, the *White Plains*, and *Jerseys*; when you were in possession of the whole province of *New Jersey*, and *Pennsylvania* was at your feet; when the terror of the British arms had struck a panic into almost every disloyal breast, and the Congress themselves had given up all as lost; why did you not embrace this critical moment, when the minds of men were thus prepared for the purpose, to explain with *precision* the upright intentions of Government towards them? Why did you not take a single step towards reconciling the province you had then conquered, as an example to the rest? This policy was so obvious, so necessary to the success of your commission, that it could not possibly have escaped your attention. You must have seen, that, circumstanced as the Colonies were at the times I have mentioned, this measure would have rescued the unhappy people

people from their delusion; would have brought multitudes over to the side of Government, and greatly weakened the rebellion, if it had not been the means of compelling the Congress to lay down their arms, and accept of the terms proposed. And yet it is a truth, that you and your Brother still contented yourselves with only publishing again an offer of pardon, without the least intimation of your powers. There is something so equivocal, so inexplicable in this whole conduct, so inconsistent with the tenor of your trust, with the service of your Sovereign, with the practice of all sensible men, and even with the dictates of humanity itself, that it is impossible to trace it up to a justifiable motive.

The refusal of Congress to treat but upon their own terms, and your Lordship's declining to make an appeal to the people at large, by opening to them the extent of your commission, was an appeal to the sword. From that moment your first commission ceased; and it became your duty to devise every measure your naval abilities could suggest, and to exert every power your Sovereign had put into your hands, to suppress the rebellion.

For this purpose you and your Brother were entrusted with the command of a force vastly superior to the object. We have seen him in *America* at the head of 40,000 high-spirited veteran troops, perfectly disciplined and appointed. The northern army, in addition, was ordered to co-operate with them. The Congress, with their utmost exertions, were not able to bring into the field, at any one time, more than 18,000 men, for the most part not 8000, and at several times less than 4000; and these were new-raised, undisciplined, and badly appointed troops. The force delivered to your Lordship's command, was more superior to its object than that of your Brother. You had, in the year 1776, *sixty-six*, and in the year following *eighty-one*, vessels of war, of every size and draught of water that could possibly be of service in that country. Their force was most extravagant, and their numbers

numbers more than sufficient to line the whole American coast, from *Boston* to the *Savanna*, when stationed within sight one of another, had it been necessary. The naval force of the Congress was no more than *twelve* vessels, of the smaller size, and none exceeding 32 guns.

See, my Lord, an estimate of the force committed to your direction, and of that which you had to contend with. The one is so great, and the other so trifling, that all proportion is lost in the comparison.

A LIST of the SHIPS of War on the *North-American* Station in the Years 1776 and 1777.

*N. B. Those which are marked * were sent out in 1777.*

	Guns.		Guns.
Boyne	70	*Diamond	32
Asia	64	*Lark	32
Somerset	64	*Richmond	32
Eagle	64	*Amazon	32
*Ambuscade	64	Thetis	32
Bristol	50	Liverpool	28
Centurion	50	Active	28
Chatham	50	*Carysfort	28
Experiment	50	Cerberus	28
Jersey	50	Fox	28
Ifis	50	Lizard	28
Preston	50	Milford	28
Renown	50	Solebay	28
Phoenix	44	Syren	28
Roebuck	44	Tartar	28
*Rainbow	44	Triton	28
*Blonde	32	Acteon	28
*Brune	32	Boreas	28
*Emerald	32	Deal-Castle	24
Niger	32	Fowey	24
Orpheus	32	Greyhound	24
*Pearl	32	Glasgow	24
*Thames	32	Mercury	24
*Ambuscade	32	*Daphne	20
		*Camilla	

	Guns.		Guns.
*Camilla	20	Otter	10
Lively	20	Viper	10
Rose	20	*Carcass	8
Scarborough	20	Cruizer	8
Sphynx	20	Savage	8
Falcon	18		
Ferret	18	Thunder, a bomb.	
Merlin	18		
Atalanta	16	Armed Vessels.	
King's-fisher	16	Canoe	
Senegal	16	Cherokee	
Thames	16	Diligent	
Tamer	16	Gaspee	
Nantilus	16	Halifax	
Scorpion	16	Magdalene	
Martin	14	Hope	
Swan	14	St. John	
Hawke.	10	Sultana	

exclusive of the Romney of 50 guns, the Surprise of 28, the Aldborough of 20, and an armed schooner on the Newfoundland-station.

A LIST of the REBEL NAVY in 1776.

	Guns.	
The Alfred	32	
Columbus	24	
Portsmouth	20	
Defence	16	{ An ordinary merchant-ship converted into an armed vessel; which did not answer the purpose, and therefore never was at sea.
Andre-Doria	16	
Cabot	16	{ Taken by a frigate of Lord Howe's fleet.
Northampton	14	
Hornet	12	

Wasp

Wasp	Guns.	
Fly	10	
	6	
13 Gallies	1 & 2	{ each, built for river-service only, and incapable of going to sea.

In 1777, the following ships were added to the above list:

The Randolph	36	{ Blown up in the West Indies by a British frigate.
The Hancock	32	{ Taken by Sir George Collier near Newfoundland in 1777.
Province	32	
Virginia	28	{ Taken by the Emerald frigate under Lord Howe.
Cumberland	24	
Boston	28	
Ranger	20	
Delaware	28	{ Taken by Lord Cornwallis at Philadelphia.
The Washington	36	{ These vessels were not built and fitted out until the latter part of 1777. They had never been at sea, when the army arrived at Philadelphia; and were either burnt by the Rebels immediately after the taking of Mud-Island-Fort, or in the expedition commanded by Lieutenant-colonel Maitland, in the Spring 1778, up to Trentown.
Effingham	24	
Provincial Ship	16	
Race-Horse	10	
Schooner	8	
Sloop	8	
Brig Packet	6	
4 Xebecs, each	10	
2 Fireships		
2 Floating Batteries.		

Add to this, that their ports and harbours, when you arrived, were, for the most part, naked, without fortifications or cannon. Nor could they procure the latter, except from foreign parts. Immense rewards were offered for casting them; but their metal was too brittle, or their workmen unskilful. Their powder was of their own manufacture, and very inferior in strength.

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While the General was carrying on his operations within the country, it was expected that, with a force so great, your Lordship would have distressed the Rebels without, by destroying their ships of war, blocking up their harbours, and cutting off their foreign supplies. Should it be asked, how you have complied with these expectations, what answer would you make? With all this immense force, what plans did you contrive to annoy your feeble enemy? What ports did you block up? What vessels of war did you destroy or take? Or what foreign supplies did you cut off from America? It is unfortunate, my Lord, that your communications with Government have not been laid before the Public. Had that been done, we might possibly have learned from yourself your own exploits. However, if we have not these communications to shew what your Lordship did, it is impossible to conceal from us what your Lordship might have done, and did not; and it is probable we may, upon enquiry, arrive at material positive truths by negative proofs.

I do not intend, my Lord, to trace your naval manœuvres in detail. I shall content myself with holding up to your Lordship and the public a mirror, in which may be seen the great out-lines of your conduct. As to naval expeditions, I never heard of one attempted or even projected, although it is undeniably true, that there was no harbour between Boston and Charlestown that could have resisted, with success, two of your larger and two of your middle-sized vessels: and that there were many, in which their armed and trading vessels lay, without a single gun on land for their protection: even the port of *Boston* remained unfortified until the arrival of D'Estaing; and the port of *Philadelphia* was covered only by a half-finished battery of seven ordinary guns, placed on a flat piece of ground, not higher than the margin of the river, until fourteen months had elapsed after your arrival. The ports of *Little and Great Egg Harbour*, within
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one day's sail of your head quarters; those of *Sinepuxent*, *Matchapungo*, and *Rock Inlet*, within two days sail; and the ports in the *Chesapeake*, and the *Albemarle Sound*, were all together defenceless. These were the places in which the Rebel naval force was to be found, and from which the trade of the Middle Colonies was carried on; and it required but little of that gallantry you displayed in the former war to destroy them.

But if the destroying the Rebel naval force was not an object of your prowess, the nation might have expected that you would at least have blocked up their ports; and yet with all your force, you did not block up the ports of any one Colony. The *New England* roads and harbours, during the much greater part of the time of your command, were entirely neglected. Here they built most of their principal vessels of war, fitted out by far the greater number of their privateers, and from hence they traded with foreign countries. Their outward-bound cargoes were indeed of no great value, being principally lumber. No tobacco or indigo was to be found on board them; and their return-cargoes consisted chiefly of naval and military stores; both of them of too small value to be worthy of your Lordship's attention. If a few frigates were sent to the mouth of the *Delaware*, they were never seen but once so high up as *Reedy Island*, their PROPER STATION. And the ports of *Little* and *Great Egg Harbours*, which served all the purposes of trade to the merchants of *New Jersey* and *Pennsylvania*, were left entirely open. If the like number were sent to the mouth of the *Chesapeake* in search after the large ships laden with tobacco; the ports of *Sinepuxent*, *Matchapungo* and *Rock Inlet*, were equally neglected. And if a few vessels of war were cruising in search of the ships laden with indigo from *South Carolina*, the trade in the *Albemarle Sound* was an object unworthy of your attention.

If you really intended to have blocked up the trade of the Colonies, you might have performed it

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with one-sixth part of your force. The method you pursued of suffering your frigates to lie a small portion of their time within the mouths of extensive bays, and cruising the remainder without, did not afford the least prospect of success. It was, indeed, wisely calculated to encourage the Rebel merchants to load their vessels, and to decoy them out to sea; and it had these effects. But your principal design of taking them proved, in a great measure, unsuccessful. The captains of the Rebel vessels were too wise not to wait for the favourable opportunities. Gales and high winds often happen in America. These, as often, blew your cruising frigates off the coasts, and opened a passage for the American vessels.

It was the practice of your cruisers to remain generally at sea; and when they wanted water or fresh provisions, to sail a small distance up the bays. Here the loyal inhabitants supplied them in the night with every article which the country produced, at the lowest prices. During their stay the Rebel vessels never dared to stir out of their harbours. But, how much soever preventing the sailing of their vessels might distress the Rebels, it was unprofitable to your cruisers. They, therefore, soon returned to sea, and the rebel captains were always ready with their loaded vessels to take the advantage of a gale of wind, and in general avoided the King's ships. However, a few, were taken going out, and some on their return. To avoid this, the vessels belonging to the merchants of *Philadelphia* put into *Little Egg Harbour*, on the Jersey coast; and those belonging to Maryland and Virginia into *Sinepuxent*, *Matchapungo*, *Rock Inlet* or *Albemarle Sound*. Here they discharged their cargoes of naval and military stores and merchandize. From *Egg Harbour* these effects were transported by land fifty miles to *Philadelphia*; from *Sinepuxent*, *Matchapungo*, and *Rock Inlet*, over land to the *Chesapeake*, and thence across that bay in shallops to *Virginia*, and the western shore of *Maryland*. From the
Albemarle

Albemarle Sound, they passed up to *South Quay*, and from thence by land to *Suffolk* on *Nansemond river*. Here they were again put into shallops, and transported to all parts of the Middle Colonies.

In the year 1777, the Middle Colonies did not furnish salt sufficient for Washington's troops to eat with their meals, and much less to salt their provisions. By the open trade you permitted up the *Albemarle Sound*, the people of North Carolina were furnished with large quantities of salt; and that country abounding in hogs, Washington's Commissary laid up at *Suffolk* his magazines of salt provisions. From hence through the mouth of *Nansemond*, and up the *Chesapeake*, they were carried to the *Head of Elk*, and from thence in waggons to the *Valley Forge*. Aided by these supplies his army was saved from famine: and yet with all the benefit of them, he was often so much distressed as to be obliged to reduce his men to half allowance. The craft in which they were transported being small, the distance great, the roads extremely deep in the winter, and Washington's horses for the most part dead, they could scarcely be transported in such quantities as were necessary to preserve his army from being frequently in want.

All these circumstances were known to the British General, and of course, we may presume, to the British Admiral.† The method by which this

† While the British General lay at Philadelphia, and Washington at the Valley-Forge, in a manner destitute of provisions, the following intelligence was brought in by a gentleman of undoubted veracity from Virginia: that Washington had wrote to Patrick Henry, the Governor of Virginia, desiring him immediately to employ Mr. Aylet, a former Commissary, who had been disgusted, to purchase in Carolina, and the southern parts of Virginia, what salt provisions he could, at any price; that the army could not subsist without them. That Aylet was accordingly employed, and by his deputies was laying up large quantities; at Smithfield, by George Purdie, Thomas Pierce, and Thomas Smith: at Cabin-Point, in Surry-county, by Archibald Dunlap; and several other places. These provisions were ordered to be collected at *Suffolk*, on *Nansemond*, from thence tran-

supply might have been prevented was pointed out; nor would it have been attended with either difficulty or danger. A single frigate stationed at the *Tangier Islands*, and another at the mouth of *Nansemond*, with two small armed vessels, or tenders, cruising up *James River*, would have totally obstructed the navigable part of the transportation. As to the carriage by land, the distance, which is four hundred miles, was so great, waggons and horses in that country so scarce, and the roads in the winter so impassable, that it was utterly impracticable. And yet no frigates were sent to the *Tangier* or *Nansemond*, and by this neglect Washington's army was benevolently saved from ruin.

It was impossible for a man of your Lordship's penetration not to discover, that cruising at sea, and taking by chance a Rebel vessel, although it might help to mend your fortune, could not cut off either their naval or military stores, or ruin their commerce, the only effectual means in your power of suppressing the rebellion. Had you after this discovery changed your plan, and adopted others, which a small share of naval skill must have suggested; such as seeking for, and destroying their vessels in their ports, or blocking up the roads to and from their harbours, we might have found an apology for your first mistake: but to persevere in an error, during the space of two years, when every week discovered its folly, is not to be justified.

That their naval force and merchant-ships might have been destroyed with little difficulty or risk,

sported in boats to the Head of Elk, and from thence in waggons to the *VALLEY FORGE*. That these places were all defenceless, and accessible up *James-river*. That the provisions might be easily destroyed by a few men, as several of the loyalists would assist in it. That there was no standing militia in these parts. And further, that a frigate, and two or three small armed boats, cruising up *James-river*, and near the mouth of *Nansemond*, would effectually prevent the water-transportation; and that the land-carriage was utterly impracticable in the winter and spring.

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has been already shewn: we will next examine the practicability of effectually stopping up their harbours.

Every American harbour of the least mercantile importance might have been so watched with a sixth part of your force, as to have prevented the escape of a single vessel of consequence. The other two sixth parts, for more abundant caution, might have been employed in cruising off the coasts; and the remaining three-sixths been attendant on the army. Had you directed two of your frigates to remain constantly in the *Delaware*, the one at *Bumbo Hook*, and the other at *Reedy Island*;* three in the *Chesapeak*, one of them in *Hampton Road*,† another in *Mockjack Bay*, at the mouth of *York River*; and the third at the *Tangier Islands*, opposite the mouth of *Potomack*;‡ and by stationing one at *Collison's Island*, in *Albemarle Sound*,§ and another at the mouth of *Egg Harbour*, you must have entirely blocked up every port in the Colonies of *New Jersey*, *Pennsylvania*, *Maryland*, *Virginia*, and the nor-

* These frigates would have entirely obstructed the navigation of the *Delaware*.

† A frigate at *Hampton Road* would have intercepted all vessels coming in or going out of *Chesapeak Bay*.

‡ A frigate stationed at the *Tangiers*, with a tender cruising up and down the bay, would have prevented all communication between the Western shore of the *Chesapeak*, and the ports of *Matchapungo*, *Rock Inlet*, and *Sinepuxent*, on the Eastern sea-coast, and all the inland navigation up and down that bay, and cut off those supplies with which *Washington's* army was continually furnished from *North Carolina*, and the Southern parts of *Virginia*.

§ A very extensive trade is carried on up this Sound. The merchants of *Maryland* and *Virginia* send their country-produce down in craft to *Suffolk*, on *Nansemond*; from thence it is carried in waggons to *South Quay*, above *Chowan-ferry*, where their vessels take it in, and proceed down *Chowan River*, and through the Sound to the Ocean. Their return-cargoes are brought back from *South Quay* in the same carriages. Upwards of three hundred vessels came up this Sound, and returned with their cargoes in the year 1777 to feed the rebellion, although a single frigate at *Collison's Island*, or *Powell's Point*, would have prevented it.

thern parts of North Carolina. And had you added to this plan, eight more vessels to have watched, in like manner, the harbours of *New England* and *South Carolina*, the whole commerce of the revolted Colonies must have ceased. Their army and navy must have been ruined, from an utter impracticability of procuring for them the necessary provisions, clothing and military stores. Their produce must have perished on their hands. The people themselves would have been made wise by their distresses: and in spite of all your Brother's inactivity and misconduct, the rebellion must have fallen under its own folly and imbecillity.

These sentiments, my Lord, are not chimerical; they are truths evident to every skilful American mariner: and they will appear to be so to every European of judgment, who will examine the charts of the American coasts. And were I to appeal to the experience of the uninfluenced mariners under your Lordship's command, they also must pronounce them truths. For it is a well known fact, that while a single frigate lay within the mouth of the *Delaware* or *Cheapeake*, the Rebel vessels did not attempt to pass; the improbability of their escape effectually prevented them from adventuring it. How much more so must it have been, had your frigates been constantly stationed in their proper places!

My Lord, you know, or ought to have known, because every sensible American could have told you, that from the *Eastern Ports*, and those of *Little and Great Egg Harbour*, *Sinepuxent*, *Matchaugo*, *Rock Inlet*, and *Albemarle Sound*, the produce of all the Rebel Colonies were principally exported; and that in return the Congress were perpetually receiving large supplies of *naval and military stores*, and all the foreign necessities of life. By which means alone they were enabled to increase their navy, to furnish and support their army, and to keep the people, disarmed as they were, from rising in opposition to their tyrannical measures.

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You know, my Lord, that no Colony raises all the materials necessary to build and fit out a ship. If the *Northern* have timber and tar, they want iron and hemp. If the *Middle* have iron and hemp, they have not pitch or tar; and if the *Southern* produce pitch and tar, they have not iron. None of them have canvas for sails, nor a sufficient quantity of hemp for manufacturing one half the cordage which their trade requires. Of salt, that requisite of life, they had none save what was produced from their lately made salterns; and such was its quality, that it would not preserve their meat from putrefaction. Of rum, wine, sugars, and molasses, they have none. Of clothing, they have not the materials to manufacture one tenth part of what is necessary to a comfortable existence. Of cannon, they had little, nor have they been able to manufacture more. Their powder was bad; and they could not find artists sufficient to furnish them with musquets to supply their army. From these circumstances, their naval and land force, and the subsistence of the rebellion, depended on a constant trade with each other, and with foreign countries.

Here the Americans were vulnerable, they were vincible. The design of war is to distress an enemy, and by that distress to reduce him to reason: and yet you neither destroyed their naval force in their ports, nor blocked it up in their harbours. You suffered them, almost at pleasure, to traverse the ocean, to seize the British vessels in the *European*, and *West Indian* seas, to capture the British transports in the very places where your vessels ought to have been cruising, and even in the *Delaware*, within a few miles of your fleet.

You suffered the Rebel merchants to carry a constant and extensive trade from all their ports, and even from *Egg Harbour*, within twenty leagues of your head quarters. And when the Loyalists at *New York*, enraged at your inactivity, and the losses they daily sustained, offered to destroy the Rebel ships in that port, provided you would give them permission,

permission, with a small share of your assistance ; they were not obtained. In short, my Lord, you suffered the Rebels to import whatever was necessary to relieve their distress, and to support that rebellion you were sent to suppress.

While you were thus employing the force under your command without energy or effect, there was something yet more unaccountable in your conduct. Your influence was made use of to suppress the zeal and exertions of others in the service of your country. The facts are : the Rebels were continually fitting out privateers in almost all their ports. These were constantly intercepting the British merchandize in the European as well as the American seas. In consequence of this, in the month of April 1777, authority from the Admiralty was sent over to the King's Governors in America, to grant to his Majesty's loyal subjects the like commissions against the people in rebellion. Many of these Loyalists who had taken refuge under the protection of your Lordship and your Brother, and who had saved from the wrecks of their confiscated estates a small portion of them, were desirous of assisting the Crown in suppressing the rebellion. Many of these applied to the Governors for those commissions, and many privateers would have been immediately fitted out, could they have been obtained. But through your *influence and interference, those commissions were refused.* The zeal and proffered services of his Majesty's faithful subjects in the Colonies were suppressed—the orders of your Sovereign through the Admiralty were superseded—and the Rebel privateers permitted to commit their piracies on the British merchandize wherever they could find it, and even to seize your own supplies on the coast you were sent to guard.

In vain, my Lord, will you attempt to vindicate a conduct so unjust and impolitic : unjust in respect to injured and suffering individuals, and impolitic in respect to the object of your trust and the welfare of your country. The reason, and the only reason assigned,

assigned, is an apprehension in your Lordship, that the privateers would take from the fleet under your command the seamen necessary to fight and navigate it. My Lord, you and your Brother had an absolute command in the American seas, and within the British lines. You had it in your power to issue out what orders, and to carry into execution what regulations you pleased. No privateer could pass out of any port in your possession without your consent, and none would have dared to disobey your orders; or if they had, you might have seized every seaman belonging to your fleet so taken; and moreover, have made an example of the delinquent Captain. Nothing, therefore, was necessary to remove this objection, but a proclamation prohibiting the Captains of privateers from taking British seamen.

However, my Lord, although you could not perceive the great advantage which his Majesty's service would receive from the aid of these letters of mart, it was evident to others. Your immediate successor took the proper measures to prevent the desertion of the British seamen. And your influence ceasing with your resignation, the same Governor,* who had been prevented by it from obeying the orders of your Sovereign, no longer hesitated to grant commissions of mart, and to give every encouragement to the laudable efforts of his loyal American subjects. Upwards of forty vessels were immediately ready to receive their commissions; and many more were fitted out with the greatest expedition. A proclamation was issued to encourage the well-affected mariners to desert the Rebel country, and the Rebel service; and it had its effect; insomuch that not less than 7000 men were soon employed in the letters of mart against the enemy. Very different was the conduct of these Loyalists, who wished to serve *their country* as well as themselves, from the practice of your cruisers. They fought the enemy wherever he was to be

* Governor Tryon.

found. They did not content themselves with cruising at sea, and watching for the rich trading vessels. The Rebel navy and privateers were equally objects of their prowess and pursuit. They entered the rivers and seized the rebel vessels, armed, and unarmed, in their very ports. They made, and brought into New York, in the space of a few months, upwards of *one hundred and fifty captures*, of the value of two hundred and fifty thousand pounds *Sterling*: and really performed more effectual service,* in distressing the enemy, and reducing the rebellion, in *six months*, than was done in *two years* by the *immense* force of your whole fleet.

One instance more among many of the same complexion with the last, deserves to be related. While you were at Philadelphia, a plan was proposed to you by a number of Loyalists, *to destroy the Rebel force in their ports*. These loyalists were well skilled in naval affairs, were perfectly acquainted with *every American harbour*, and were men of *tried spirit and gallantry*. A number of galleys built at Philadelphia, and taken from the enemy, were unmanned, nor had you supernumerary mariners to navigate and fight them. These Gentlemen offered to raise three hundred seamen, and with them to scour the Delaware of the force then intercepting the supplies of provisions from the country, and even taking the clothing and provisions sent from Europe for the army and navy; and to destroy the trade and naval force at *Egg Harbour*,

* Since his Lordship's resignation, the Rebel navy has been, in a great measure, destroyed by the small British force remaining in America, and the privateers sent out from New York. Their navy, which consisted, at the time of his Lordship's departure, of thirty vessels, is now reduced to eight. And the number of privateers fitted out in New England, amounting to an hundred and upwards, is now less than forty. The prices of all foreign necessaries and articles of commerce are raised more than 200 per cent. exclusive of the depreciation of their money. And so great is the risk of their trade, that no insurance can be procured in America.

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and in the other ports along the coasts, provided you would give them the command of these useless gallies. *Of this proposal you yourself approved.* Your orders were issued for raising the men. One of the gentlemen raised his number in less than a week, another nearly so, and all would have succeeded in a fortnight. But this rapid success, instead of encouraging, seemed totally to subvert the design. Your orders were suddenly withdrawn: the captains and mariners were dismissed. The Rebel trade, as before, was continually carried on. Your supplies were seized, and nothing was attempted to prevent it.

It will be difficult to find a reason to justify a conduct so inconsistent with the service you were sent to perform. That assigned cannot answer the end. Several of the inferior officers of the navy, it seems, murmured at seeing the captains of these gallies holding a commission above them. This was the ostensible reason, while many thought another was the true one. The officers did not wish to see others gaining the emoluments which must have been the result of these expeditions. My Lord, you knew that the Loyalists wished not to command a single officer in the navy. They had their own officers, and had no objection to be commanded themselves. They desired not any promotion in the navy. Their zeal and loyalty prompted them to serve their country for a time, under your direction; and when that service was performed, to retire to their private stations. They did not wish to break into the line of naval preferment. The inferior officers of the navy had it not in their power to raise the men. They were strangers in the port, and without influence; yet they would neither do the business themselves, nor permit others to perform it. Your Lordship paid a *shameful respect* to their murmurs, and sacrificed this important service to their *unreasonable and interested* humours. Indeed, it is difficult to determine, whether in the *naval* or in the *land* service greater

greater discouragement was given to the tendered services of the faithful Americans. In both, the *spirit of loyalty* was suppressed, and would have been utterly extinguished, if it had not been fixed in a reliance on its Sovereign, which no policy or difficulties could shake.

Your motives to this extraordinary conduct as yet rest in speculation. We are at a loss to determine to what cause to impute it. Some who are acquainted with the favourable sentiments you entertained of the American resistance, impute it to a tenderness towards your American brethren. Others, to a connection with Opposition, and a resolution assumed before your departure to frustrate every measure of the present Administration, and thereby to bring them into disgrace with your Sovereign and the nation. Others shrewdly suspect, that "your poverty and not your will consented." They say, that it was obvious to all, and therefore it must have occurred to your Lordship, that had you, on your arrival, destroyed the Rebel ships in their ports, or effectually blocked up their harbours, no valuable captures of tobacco or indigo could have fallen to the share of the British Admiral. And there are others who fear, that all these formed one great aggregate of motives to your Lordship's conduct.

I will not, my Lord, pass any decisive strictures on your conduct at Rhode Island. You there met D'Estaing with a force which you must have thought more than necessary to defeat him, or you were not justifiable in detaching from your Squadron the *Nabob* and *Supply* to the West Indies; nor in leaving the *Leviathan* at New York. Your fleet was completely manned by many volunteer seamen, in high health and spirits, panting for action. Your enemy had been at sea upwards of *three months*. Many of his mariners were dead, and many afflicted with a putrid distemper. On sight of your fleet, compelled by necessity, he boldly came out to give you battle. Your Lordship *slipped your cables, and*
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ran from your enemy. It is said, you were manœuvring for a wind, intending to give him battle, and that a storm prevented it: *this may be possible.* However, your subsequent conduct does not appear clear of reprehension. The storm drove both the fleets to the westward. Yours was soon collected at Sandy Hook: no ships were missing. The *Apollo* frigate of 32 guns was indeed disabled, and the *Ardent* of 64 guns had lost her mizen-top-mast. But you were joined by the *Monmouth* of 64 guns, and had the *Leviathan* mounting 44 guns to supply their places. Your enemy suffered much more, and was in strength greatly reduced. The *Languedoc* of 84 guns was dismasted, her rudder lost, and the Ship rendered useless in battle. The *Marseilles* of 74 guns was dismasted. The *Cæsar* of 74, which met with the *Isis* of 50 guns, was beaten and disabled, and would have been taken if two other vessels of the French squadron had not come up to her assistance. These disabled vessels, with a part only of D'Estaing's fleet, lay eight days within twenty leagues of your whole force. Of all this you had the best intelligence. Your Lordship's force was now greatly superior. But on this, as on every other occasion, the same indolence and inaction marked your conduct. You contented yourself with sending the gallant Wallace to watch the motions of the enemy. This officer followed them to Rhode Island, and brought you intelligence they were off that harbour. After his arrival you loitered two days before you sailed in pursuit. By this unaccountable delay, you suffered your enemy to tow the *Languedoc*, without a mast or rudder, and his other disabled ships, from the southward of your station into the port of Boston. And considering their disabled and distressed situation, you calculated time with so much precision, as to allow them only sufficient to do it, a few hours before your arrival off that harbour. Why, my Lord, did you not embrace this opportunity so favourable, and so providentially put into your hands? You must have destroyed your

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enemy, and prevented his subsequent exploits in the West Indies, so mischievous to your country. Dominica, St. Vincent's, and the Grenades would have yet remained the territories of Britain, and the British fleet superior in the British seas to that of her united enemies.

But why should I dwell on these national misfortunes, arising from the indolence and misconduct of your Lordship and your Brother, when so many others remain to be told—others almost too great for description. Britain is now groaning under the immensity of their weight, and yet their progress is not stopped; one evil ever surpassing in magnitude the last, flows out of another in continual succession: nor is it possible for the wisest of men to tell when or where they will end. Had you, my Lord, destroyed the Rebel force in their defenceless ports; had you stopped up their harbours, and cut off their foreign military stores; or had you, with *one-eighth part of your force*, assaulted or only appeared on the *New England* coasts, ready to assault them when General Burgoyne was attempting to pass to Albany, the Rebel army would have been destitute of the means of war; their militia could not have been raised against him; you would have rescued a British army from passing under the *disgraceful yoke of rebellion*; you would have saved that army, and with it the honour of your country, and laid a sure foundation for the speedy reduction of America. The minds of men, no longer blinded by interested misrepresentations, plainly perceive, that out of our misfortune at *Saratoga*, every subsequent public evil has naturally arisen. It was that misfortune which produced the alliance between *France* and *America*. It was that misfortune which drew D'Estaing to America, compelled the British cabinet to order the evacuation of Philadelphia, and to withdraw a part of the troops to the West Indies; and it was that misfortune which has involved your unhappy country in a war with two powerful enemies, and in every foreign and domestic evil under which it
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now labours. For it is now universally agreed, that had your Lordship and your Brother saved the northern army, which you had abundant power to do, the rebellion, then in its infant state, must have been suppressed; the war with France and Spain had not happened; and, what is yet of more moment to the peace and safety of the empire, that faction which is daily distracting the councils of state, and wrenching asunder the union of power which is necessary to its safety, would now hide its monstrous head in the dark cells of its own folly and treason.

While these strictures are drawn from me by the powerful incentives of public justice and love of my country, unmixed with the least personal malignity towards your Lordship, I cannot help lamenting the occasion for them; and that your Lordship and your Brother should have lost so favourable an opportunity of immortalizing your fame. Had you, without bloodshed, reconciled the disputes between two countries whose welfare and existence depend on their union, or had you reduced the obstinacy of rebellion to reason and obedience by your military skill and valour, your Sovereign was ready to pour on your heads the choicest rewards of nobility; your country to sound your fame from pole to pole, with the trumpet of gratitude and applause; and future historians would never have ceased to record with rapture the glory of the Two Brothers, till time should be no more.

Upon a careful examination, I am not conscious of having overcharged these remarks: and I know, that there are many other facts of the same tendency which remain to be told; but the subject is too replete with distresses of my country, and too affecting to your Lordship's sensibility, for me to dwell on with pleasure. I shall, therefore, take my leave, requesting only, that if you cannot, after perusal of these strictures, think I am your Lordship's friend, you will believe me to be, what I truly am,

THE FRIEND OF YOUR COUNTRY.

